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up a puritanical standard of morality when
their own
literature contained many examples of
outspokenness going
far beyond anything that he had ventured
upon. Apart
from the writers of the past, he had some
acquaintance
with modern English novels such as had been
translated
into French, there being various series of
that kind;¹
and he took the view that many of them, with
the glamour
they cast over vice and even their artful
reticence, were
certainly calculated to demoralise people,
whereas his own
rough frankness could only give the reader a
shock, as in-
deed it was intended to do. At the same
time he was
not surprised at the outcry, for there had
been one in
France, where the ground was far better
prepared for out-
spokenness than in England, where the cant of
the Victorian
era had ever striven to set restrictions on
the novelist's
art. Thackeray, we know, had chafed under
them, and
had written on his preface to "Pendennis": "
Even the
gentlemen of our age . . . we cannot show as
they are,
with the notorious foibles and selfishness of
their lives and
their education. Since the author of 'Tom
Jones' was
buried no writer of fiction among us has
been permitted
to depict to his utmost power a MAN. We
must drape

him, and give him a certain conventional
simper, Society
will not tolerate the Natural² in our Art."

¹ Ou consulting the " Bibliographic de la France " some
years ago, for
particulars concerning English fiction in France, the
writer found that in
1886 French publishers issued translations of fifty-four
English novels ; in
1887, translations of sixty-one ; and in 1888, thirty-nine.
The total number
of English (and American) works of all classes published in
France in 1888
was one hundred and twenty-three, but of these forty-two
were merely new
editions, leaving the number of the translations first
issued in that year at
eighty-one.

² This is perhaps the earliest reference to Naturalism in
English literature.